

The earliest occurrence of that name in literature is in the chronicle by Ammianus Marcellinus (A.D. 326-391) describing under the year 364 how the Roman province in North Britain was continually raided by "Picti Saxonesque et Scoti et Attecotti". The "Pictish Chronicle", composed in the fourteenth century, begins with a quotation from the "Origenes" of Isidore, Bishop of Seville (560-636), as follows:

"Picti propria lingua nomen habent a picto corpore"; but it is to be noted that Bishop Isidore wrote "Scoti" not "Picti"—painted.

Hostilities which Great Britain had to wage in defence of her colony in South Africa at frequent

intervals between 1809 and 1877 are still commonly termed the Kaffir War; but Kāfir is only an Arabic term for infidel or stranger, and none of the native tribes engaged in that war call themselves Kaffirs.

Nicknames were bandied pretty freely in the late European War; British soldiers speaking of their German foe as Huns, while the French termed them Boches. So in the fourth century, Ammianus Marcellinus, who was never in or near Britain, would hear the Celtic foes of the Empire commonly referred to in Rome as Picti.

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### Points from Foregoing Letters

STRONG indications that a few females of the native oyster, *O. edulis*, can produce young at an age of little more than a year, are reported by a group of investigators from the University of Liverpool. The number of shelled and just coloured larvæ born by one of the females was estimated at 240,000. About 12,000 larvæ (in the trochosphere stage) were counted in a drop of liquid after three days settlement. The authors also give a graph showing the relative weight distribution, in one-year old English native oysters.

F. W. James, Dr. J. S. Anderson and Prof. H. V. A. Briscoe find that when complex cobaltamines are dissolved in partially heavy water, complete isotopic interchange takes place, as reported by Erlenmeyer and Gartner, but that it requires some hours. Since the exchange can be stopped by rapidly distilling off the water from the solution or, better, by precipitating the complex, for example, as the mercurichloride,  $[\text{Co}(\text{NH}_3)_6]\text{Cl}_2 \cdot \text{HgCl}_2$ , a kinetic analysis of the reaction is possible and is being undertaken.

Mr. W. C. Pei announces that a fifth skull of early man in China has been discovered, and that a preliminary report by Prof. F. Weidenreich will appear shortly on the new material.

A very minute effect has been found by the Michelson-Morley-Miller experiment for determining the absolute velocity of the earth. Prof. W. B. Cartmel states that if one of the arms of the interferometer is inclined at a different angle from the other, a very large fringe shift may be observed even with a small interferometer. The experiment is simple, and can easily be repeated.

An increase in the number of radio atmospherics observed in Paris and also at Tunis and Rabat on December 12, 1936, is attributed by R. Bureau to an improvement in the propagation of the long waves over a great distance. This seems to be due to the ionospheric perturbations following upon the solar hydrogen eruption observed on the same date and at the same time at Greenwich by H. W. Newton.

In answer to Prof. Synge's criticism, Prof. Leigh Page submits an example indicating that his relativistic theory is able to dispense, in certain cases, with both the concept of the rigid measuring rod and that of the isochronous clock.

A method for the measurement under the microscope of fog-, cloud- and rain-droplets is described by N. Fuchs and I. Petrijanoff. The droplets are collected on glass slides coated with a mixture of vaseline and mineral oil, which practically prevents the evaporation of the droplets, without affecting their spherical shape.

The preparation of a highly active apo-dehydrogenase (a non-dialysable and heat-sensitive colloidal carrier, protein in nature) which is an essential component in the fermentation of alcohol, is described by M. Sreenivasaya. The purified preparation is 135-fold more active than the original yeast extract.

The activity of the hormone progesterone in inducing ovulation in the South African clawed frog, *Xenopus lewis*, is described by Dr. H. Zwarenstein. Ovulation was induced not only in adult normal animals but also in a certain proportion of immature normal animals and in others from which the pituitary gland had been removed. The hormone also acts upon ovaries *in vitro*.

In *Pisum sativum* the genes *R* and *A* (*R/r* = round/wrinkled, *A/a* = coloured/white flowers) have hitherto been found, according to Miss Caroline Pellew, to be independent in the normal structural type. The relation of these two genes in the three structural heterozygotes, found by Mrs. Sansome to have one interchanged chromosome, No. 1, in common, show that they are located in this chromosome in the normal structural type.

S. Paramasivan reports that the classical Jain paintings at Sittannaval in South India have been executed in *fresco-secco* technique. He gives the results of analysis of the plaster and the pigments. Lime, carbon, yellow and red ochres, lapis lazuli and terre verte have been used as pigments.

S. Bhagavantam and Dr. A. Veerabhadra Rao have photographed the Raman spectrum of benzene vapour. While the principal line at 992 shows no shift, the line at 3061 in the liquid shifts to 3069 in the vapour and 3047 has not appeared in the vapour picture. Considerable alterations take place in the structure and intensity of the 'rotation wing' on passing from the liquid to the vapour.

The fact that Cario and Stille could not observe the negative bands of nitrogen and those first-positive bands which originate on vibrational levels higher than  $v' = 14$ , is due, according to Prof. J. Kaplan, to incomplete purification of the nitrogen in their discharge tubes.

R. N. Rai has calculated the conditions of reflection of radio waves from the ionosphere on the assumption that the group velocity vanishes. In addition to the usual results, a new condition for the extraordinary ray is found according to which the penetration frequency difference is only one fifth the expected results. This is in agreement with the observations made at the Physical Laboratory, University of Allahabad.